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HOUSE RESOLUTION 186
By Turner (Ham)

A RESOLUTION memorializing the Tennessee Congressional delegation to support the Tennessee Valley Authority's appropriated budget for fiscal year 1999 and beyond.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) integrated river management system, which includes the management of TVA Lands and Water, Land Between the Lakes and the Environmental Research Center, is cost effective by any standard and a bargain to this nation with a total annual operating budget of \$77 million; and

WHEREAS, nowhere, except in the Tennessee Valley, does a system to manage a major watershed exist as an integrated unit; and

WHEREAS, TVA's integrated system optimizes the available volume and variety of outputs from the river basin and ensures that economic and environmental benefits are spread evenly throughout the Tennessee Valley; and

WHEREAS, the efficient decision-making of one agency working across city, county and state boundaries according to the ecosystem of the river basin can never be replaced, if allowed to disintegrate; and

WHEREAS, only when the TVA system is operated as a single unit, can it optimize the productivity of public natural resources and power facilities and provide all of the benefits expected by the citizens of the Tennessee Valley and this nation; and

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WHEREAS, TVA performs land and water stewardship with appropriated federal funds just as other federal agencies, including the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, perform similar functions with federal tax dollars in other regions of the country; and

WHEREAS, a great injustice would be perpetuated against the citizens of the Tennessee Valley, if they were to be denied access to the same federal benefits and functions that the rest of this nation receives; and

WHEREAS, the TVA's proposed fiscal year 1999 budget also includes \$6.8 million to begin design and engineering work to replace the outdated and crumbling Chickamauga Lock on the Tennessee River; and

WHEREAS, these federal funds to rebuild and reconstruct the Chickamauga Lock are desperately needed to secure the future of economic waterway travel in the Chattanooga area, as all estimates show that the present lock will fail by 2005, jeopardizing commerce on the Tennessee River and thousands of jobs throughout the Tennessee Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Spallation Neutron Source Research Project for Oak Ridge is also included in President Clinton's fiscal year 1999 budget; and

WHEREAS, just as the continued operation of TVA as a single integrated management unit is essential to the citizens of the Tennessee Valley, the Spallation Neutron Source Research Project is equally important to the economic prosperity of Oak Ridge, as thousands of jobs are dependent upon adequate funding for the project; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative for the U.S. Congress to take all necessary and prudent actions to secure the present and future needs of the southern part of this great nation and the communities of the Tennessee Valley, Chattanooga and Oak Ridge areas; and

WHEREAS, located in western Kentucky and Tennessee, Land Between the Lakes (LBL) is a crown jewel in TVA's integrated management system and the center of a \$400 million tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, more than two million outdoor enthusiasts visit Land Between the Lakes annually from all 50 states and 20 foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, LBL was the third most visited attraction in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, under TVA's astute management, Land Between the Lakes is a leader in cost recovery among federally managed national recreation areas, with over one-third (1/3) of its total operating costs being recouped through fees and generated revenues; and

WHEREAS, despite claims to the contrary, transferring the management of LBL to another federal agency would not be cost efficient, as another agency would require the same amount of, if not more, federal tax dollars to perform the numerous functions for which TVA is presently responsible; and

WHEREAS, it is doubtful that a single agency could duplicate TVA's multi-faceted management of LBL, which includes land and water maintenance, tourism, living educational programs, and environmental programs; and

WHEREAS, throughout its estimable existence, TVA has operated a safe, efficient natural resource and power agency; and

WHEREAS, today, TVA and its employees remain committed to ensuring that the agency competently carries out its Congressionally assigned responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, as long as TVA is a federally owned asset, Congress can ensure that the productivity of natural resources, as well as its generation and transmission facilities, are maintained and managed in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to subdivide or privatize the TVA system would surely decrease its productivity, and would result in taxpayers and rate payers paying more for fewer benefits; and

WHEREAS, this Body recognizes that federal appropriations to TVA symbolize a commitment to keeping public lands and natural resources protected by national environmental policies; and

WHEREAS, because the agency's various components all work together as a single unit in the public interest, it is imperative that TVA be allowed to continue its important work; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That this General Assembly hereby memorializes the U.S. Congress, and especially the Tennessee Congressional delegation, to strongly support and work assiduously to enact the Tennessee Valley Authority appropriated budget for fiscal year 1999 and beyond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Body hereby expresses its collective belief that TVA should remain a federally-owned asset.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we most strongly urge and encourage the U.S. Congress to include adequate funding for the Spallation Neutron Source Research Project at Oak Ridge in the final fiscal year 1999 budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the House is directed to transmit enrolled copies of this resolution to the Speaker and the Clerk of the U. S. House of Representatives; the President and the Secretary of the U. S. Senate; and to each member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation.